



United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Development
Vermont/New Hampshire

Rural Business Enterprise Grant Applications Requested

We expect an RBEG allocation for Vermont of approximately \$176,000. We are now inviting applications for our Fiscal Year 2007 Rural Business Enterprise Grant program. Funded activities must provide technical assistance, loan funds or a facility (owned and operated by the applicant) that will benefit a small business or businesses (less than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross profit). To learn more about the program, please visit the following website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbeg.htm>

If you have a potential project, please be aware of the following timelines:

- To compete for our state allocation your complete application must be received by close of business **January 15, 2007**. We expect to make funding decisions by February 15, 2007.
- **Special Northeast Kingdom REAP Zone.** In addition to the Vermont allocation, additional funding is available for applications from (or primarily serving) the Northeast Kingdom (NEK). The NEK Rural Economic Action Partnership (REAP) Zone allows NEK applications to qualify for EZ/EC/REAP set-aside funding in Washington. The deadline for submitting applications to Washington will be April 15, 2007. Therefore, we are asking applicants in this region to submit their RBEG applications to our office by **March 1, 2007**.
- Each year on June 30th our National Office offers funds held in reserve and/or not used by other states to the rest of the country. **Our office will continue to accept RBEG applications after the January 15th deadline** and process them for submission to compete for these funds.

Please call **Sherry Paige at 802-828-6034** to request an application package and discuss your project. We highly encourage you to call our office to discuss your project before you submit your application. As the application content varies based on the type of project proposed, please be prepared to discuss your project in relative detail when calling. **We encourage you to submit your application package for early review. Don't wait until the deadline!**

A summary of Vermont projects completed and funded during 2006 is attached for your information and reference. Also attached is the program "scoring criteria" to assist you in determining whether your project will score well.

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Committed to the future of rural communities

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To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800)795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) – FY 2006

Grantee	County / Community	Use Of Funds	\$ Amount
Brattleboro Area Farmers' Market, Inc.	Windham/ Brattleboro	Prepare a feasibility study for a permanent Farmers' Market	\$11,500
Center for Sustainable Community Development	Rutland/ Poultney	Establish revolving loan fund for Poultney businesses. Initial loan to a biodiesel company. Partnering with Green Mountain College business professors.	\$10,000
Essex Junction Village	Chittenden/ Essex Junction	Prepare food store market study for the village.	\$7,326
Foodworks' Two Rivers Center for Sustainability	Washington/ Montpelier	Conduct feasibility study for expansion and development of a regional food and farm marketing network.	\$16,724
InventVermont Inc.	Chittenden/ Statewide	Expand and upgrade web based services for entrepreneurs. Services include on-line mentoring, a "how-to" guided process to commercialize products, links to display inventions, links to inventors, a website to sell products and share ideas. 62 current members.	\$10,000
Northeast Kingdom Travel & Tourism Association	Orleans, Essex, Caledonia/ REAP Zone	Provide training to rural small businesses in Internet Marketing, Basic Marketing, Cooperative Marketing and Public Relations Marketing Assistance through a series of sessions held in the Northeast Kingdom	\$70,158
Northern Community Investment Corporation, Inc.	Orleans, Essex Caledonia/ REAP Zone	Establish a technical assistance fund for small and emerging businesses in the Northeast Kingdom	\$200,000
NOFA-VT	Chittenden/ Statewide	Provide intensive technical assistance to Island Pond Farmers' Market; general marketing and development support for 28 other farmers' markets; purchase wood fired pizza oven for pilot program "Mobile Flatbread Pizza" at 6 farmers' markets.	\$50,000
SEVCA Financial, Inc.	Windsor/ Springfield	Establish a revolving loan fund for businesses in Springfield VT. Technical Assistance provided by SEVCA for pre application and post loan.	\$7,500
Southern Windsor County Incubator, Inc.	Windsor/ Springfield	Conduct feasibility study for possible remanufacturing center in southern Windsor County to strengthen existing machine tool industry and generate related spin-offs.	\$20,720
State of Vermont, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets	Addison/ county-wide	Provide program for farmers to learn Spanish as a second language to improve their communications with their Hispanic & Latino workers.	\$12,000
Vermont Community Loan Fund, Inc.	Statewide	Recapitalize the technical assistance fund to assist small and emerging businesses	\$36,915
VT WoodNet	Statewide and gallery in Stow	Marketing assistance to WoodNet's 141 member wood product manufacturers that will include a national media campaign, website upgrades, photographic assistance and point of sale equipment for their Maplewood Gallery in Stowe.	\$45,957
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board	Statewide except Chittenden county	Expansion of the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program to assist businesses with long term planning and goal setting	\$200,000
TOTAL	14		\$698,800

SCORING CRITERIA

Population. Proposed project(s) will primarily be located in a community of (1) between 15,000 and 25,000 population - 5 points, (2) between 5,000 and 15,000 population - 10 points, (3) under 5,000 population - 15 points.

Economic conditions.

(A) Proposed project(s) will primarily be located in areas where the unemployment rate exceeds the State rate by 25 percent or more - 20 points; exceeds the State rate by less than 25 percent - 10 points; is equal to or less than State rate - 0 points.

(B) Proposed project(s) will primarily be located in areas where Median Household Income (MHI) as prescribed by Section 673 (2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C 9902 (2)) for a family of 4 for the State is: less than poverty line - 25 points; more than poverty line but less than 85 percent of State MHI - 15 points; between 85 percent and 100 percent of State MHI - 10 points; equal or greater than State MHI - 0 points.

Experience. Applicant has evidence of at least 5 years of successful experience in the type of activity proposed in the application for funds under this subpart. Evidence of successful experience may be (1) a description of experience supplied and certified by the applicant, or (2) a letter of support from appropriate local elected officials explaining the applicant's experience. Experience - 10 points.

Other.

(A) Applicant has evidence that small business development will occur by startup or expansion as a result of the activities to be carried out under the grant. Written evidence of commitment by small business must be provided to Rural Development - 25 points.

(B) Applicant has evidence of substantial commitment of funds from nonfederal sources for proposed project. An authorized representative of the source organization of the nonfederal funds must provide evidence that the funds are available and will be used for the proposed project. More than 50 percent of the project costs from nonfederal sources - 15 points; more than 25 percent, but less than 50 percent, of project costs from nonfederal sources - 10 points; between 5 percent and 25 percent of project costs from nonfederal sources - 5 points.

(C) For a grant to establish a revolving fund, the applicant provides evidence to the Agency through loan applications or letters from businesses that the loans are needed by small and emerging businesses in the proposed project area - 25 points.

(D) The anticipated development, expansion, or furtherance of business enterprises as a result of the proposed project will create and/or save jobs associated with the affected businesses. The number of jobs must be evidenced by a written commitment from the business to be assisted. One job per each \$10,000 or less in grant funds expended - 10 points. One job per each \$25,000 to \$10,000 in grant funds expended - 5 points.

(E) The proposed grant project is consistent with, and does not duplicate, economic development activities for the project area under an existing community or economic development plan covering the project area. If no local plan is in existence for the project area, an area-wide plan may be used. The plan used must be adopted by the appropriate governmental officials/entities as the area's community or economic development plan. Appropriate plan references and copies of appropriate sections of the plan, as well as evidence of plan adoption by appropriate governmental officials, should be provided to the Agency. Project is reflected in a plan - 5 points.